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Hill Plan to Quiz Korean Envoy Has State Department Worried

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Congressional attempts to put questions about possible influence buying to a former Korean ambassador, whom some Capitol Hill leaders consider more important than Tong-sun Park, is causing concern at the State Department.

Department officials worry that by trying to hold diplomats accountable, Congress could establish a precedent that would backfire on this country.

Far more American diplomats have been accused of paying politicians abroad than foreign diplomats have been charged with slipping money to American legislators.

Among recent reports has been an account of \$9 million paid to Italian politicians at the instigation of Graham Martin when he was ambassador to Rome.

The State Department concern became known as Park arrived in Washington yesterday after an 18-month absence to answer questions about "Koreagate."

PARK TOLD REPORTERS at Dulles Airport, "I hope as a result of my giving my side of the story as well as I can recollect how things did happen, I hope things will come to a happy ending." He declined to answer questions.

Park was accompanied on a flight from Honolulu, where he had rested en route from Korea, by 20 U.S. and Korean security agents. He returned to the United States under a parole arrangement to get his testimony on the investigation of possible corruption in Congress.

The former rice dealer is scheduled to meet tomorrow morning with members of the House ethics committee. In what are expected to be lengthy closed meetings, he will give a deposition U.S. officials hope will aid in investigations of Korean influence-buying on Capitol Hill.

But the chief investigator, Leon Jaworski, has said Park may actually have been a secondary figure in attempts by the South Korean government to influence U.S. decisions involving that country. Both Jaworski and House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., D-Mass., have indicated they think the Korean embassy in Washington was behind Park's operations.

Investigators have found witnesses who say that a former Korean ambassador, Kim Dong Jo, was seen stuffing \$100 bills into 24 envelopes in his office. He told one witness he was going to deliver them at the Capitol.

SOME MEMBERS of Congress are known to have received such envelopes from Kim but returned them. Investigators want to ask him whether other members kept the money.

The Korean government has, however, so far refused to make Kim available for questioning. As a result, O'Neill has talked about cutting off all aid to Korea unless Kim and other Korean diplomats cooperate in the investigation. Some senators have also suggested retaliation for failure of Korea to cooperate.

The Justice Department has refused to go along with congressional efforts to try to obtain testimony from Kim. Standing behind it has been the State Department.

The State Department has taken the attitude that the traditional immunity of diplomats must be respected. And behind that attitude is an apprehension of what might unravel if Congress were to have its way and other countries were then to begin demanding equal rights to call back former American diplomats to question them.

In the revelations in recent years of CIA activities abroad, the names of American ambassadors and other U.S. diplomats have come up a number of times. Some CIA agents operate abroad as members of embassy staffs with diplomatic immunity.

ONE ALLEGATION, that came to light two years ago, was that in 1972 Martin arranged to have \$9 million paid to Italian politicians over the objections of the CIA station chief in Rome. Some of the money reportedly went to right-wing Italian politicians who have been identified as fascists.

The \$9 million was, according to reports in 1976, only part of \$74 million invested by the CIA in Italian politics from 1948 to 1972 in an effort to further American policies and support friends of the United States.

Martin later became the last U.S. ambassador in Saigon. He is now retired from the State Department.

One key State Department official closely familiar with the Korean situation said the department could never endorse the idea of trying to get Kim to return here because of a number of potential cases involving Americans. He mentioned Martin's name and the names of several other U.S. ambassadors in past years who have been accused of passing out money.

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